AN

ODE

ON

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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3d.

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By R. S. Gent.

Majora Canamus.

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TO

Francis Browne,

OF THE

Inner-Temple, *Esq;*

SIR,

I *HAVE observ'd a Piece of Paper stuff'd with nauseous Flattery before a Book, is call'd a Dedication: The Practice is too common, the Disease epidemical; and the Mischief of it is, be it never so rank, the foolish Patron is generally pleas'd with it. I thank Heaven, I could never flatter any Body: There is nothing in the World I abhor so much as a fulsome Adulation; but were I quite the Reverse, I should find no Room here to exert that common Quality, since you are a Person so much above it; and have no more the Will or Inclination to receive it, than I the Power or Intention to offer it. I cannot, however, but own, as I have often done at other Times, that I do, and, no*

doubt, ever ſhall, retain a particular Reſpect and Veneration for you; though, certainly, how great ſo ever it be, never will reach up to, or bear the leaſt Proportion with, your Merits. I have often been charmed with your agreeable Converſation, to which you have frequently done me the Honour to admit me; and if ever I am happy, 'tis when I have the Advantage of the Company of a Man of fine Parts and good Senſe; which all that know you, muſt in Juſtice confeſs you excel in. 'Tis in Teſtimony of theſe Truths I humbly offer to you the following Ode: 'Tis a Chriſtmas-*Carol, which, though meanly dreſt, has a good Deſign. Deſpiſe it not; 'twas the Way of our Fore-fathers: And I know you are too much a Well-wiſher to the good Old Cuſtoms of* Old England, *to take it amiſs at my Hands. I hope you will excuſe my Frankneſs; 'tis my plain honeſt Way; ſuch as it is, 'tis at your Service. It proceeds as a Mark of my entire Value and Reſpect for you; beſides, it gives me a freſh Opportunity of aſſuring you, That I am,*

SIR,

From my Chamber, Dec. 15. 1715.

Your moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant,

R. S.

AN ODE ON Chriſtmas-Day.

(I)

AWAKE, my Soul, thou drowſy Power, awake;
Off thy Lethargick Slumber ſhake:
Again thy long neglected Lute prepare;
The trembling Strings ſcrew yet up higher,
And join th' Immortal Quire.
Soar up, thou thinking Principle, above this groſſer Sphere.

No more, no more, let Joys terrene,
Those airy Phantoms that delude Mankind,
Engage a Heaven-born Mind;
O'er-look each gaudy Scene,
And ev'ry painted Toy, and ev'ry gay Machine.

(II)

O bid a long and last Adieu
To all the coz'ning Crew;
To the blind Archer, and the *Cyprian* Grove;
To *Cythera*, and her Doves;
And all the flutt'ring Train of idle Loves.
Vain and imaginary Deities:
A Mystery of endless Fallacies;
Joys that are only in Appearance true.
Oh! let the World no more, nor its bright Fool'ries charm;
Blow the faint sickly Taper out; let Fires Seraphick warm.

(III)

To upper Regions go,
And leave the dull and heavy Globe, afar, below.

To upper Regions ſwiftly move,
And let not Earth retard thy haſty Flight.
Wing through th' Aetherial Realms above;
A ſoaring Eaglet now become:
View all the bliſsful Manſions of Eternal Light,
And ev'ry ſtarry Dome.
A ſhining Ray ſhatch thence,
Till, by its powerful Influence,
Thou taſts Delights vaſtly ſurpaſſing Senſe,
And grow all over Fire with bright Ecſtatick Love.

(IV)

Love be thy Theme: 'Twas Love, my Soul!
That firſt inform'd the dull and lifeleſs Maſs,
And made the Univerſe what 'tis, and was.
'Tis Love unites the Parts; 'tis Love preſerves the Whole.
'Twas Love, Almighty Love,
Th' Eternal King alone could move,
When injur'd by the Firſt ungrateful Two,
From his own Breaſt to give his only Son,
To be the mighty Hecatomb,
Sufficient to appeaſe his Wrath, and Man's loſt State renew.

(V)

And lo! th' Eternal Son,
Leaves his Great Father's awful Throne;
Th' Eternal Son accepts the mighty Load,
He leaves the Glories of the Skies,
For a long Scene of Miſeries,
To die for Rebels Crimes againſt their God,
And ſuffer ev'ry direful Scourge of an avenging Rod.
'Twas Love reverſt Man's fatal Doom;
'Twas Love alone, Love to exceſs,
That mov'd this Glorious *Prince of Peace*,
Frail humane Form t'aſſume,
Diſdaining not an humble Virgin's Womb.

(VI)

O bleſt Effects of Love Divine!
O happy News to loſt Mankind!
The King of Glory hither bends,
Lift up, poor Clay, thy drooping Head,
From Heavens Empyrial, Heavens dread Love deſcends,
No more, ye wretched Mortals, grieve,
Altho' with Sin benumb'd, and dead;
The God of Life bids ye riſe up and live.

No

No more let mournful *Sion* weep;
No more in Aſhes ſit, in Sackcloth ſleep,
Th' Expected of all Nations now appears;
Rejoyce, all ye that Mourn, be drown'd no more in Tears.

(VII)

Ceaſe then, O ceaſe, thou hideous Clank of Arms,
And all ye rugged Wars Alarms:
The willing World obeys;
The wearied Soldier throws his Armour down;
No Camps the bloody Banners own.
Rude Iron's laid aſide, and deep in Ruſt decays.
Swords and Spears forget to wound;
The Warlike Trumpet's Clangors ceaſe,
And yield to ſweeter Notes, to Notes of Peace,
To Dulcet Flutes more grateful Sound;
To Dulcet Flutes and Timbrels ſofter Harmony.
Rome's tow'ring Eagles now forbear,
As they were wont, to revel in the Air.
But all is ſtill, and all is huſh in deep Tranquillity.

(VIII)

The swift revolving Years
In happy Circles run;
The Golden Age, not such as Poets feign,
With a vast Train of Good, comes rolling on:
The Golden Age at last appears,
To cure the sickly World, and comfort wretched Man.
Wild Beasts their Fury now asswage,
And leave their savage Rage;
The woolly Herd, th' offenceless Sheep,
The Kid and Lamb afraid before,
'Midst Wolves and Leopards safely sleep;
Nor fear, as once they did, the Lion's dreadful Roar.
Children admire the Dragon's painted Wings,
Stroke his gay shining Neck, and play with Aspicks Stings.

(IX)

Thus, all in Peace, calm and serene,
Draw, draw, my Soul, the mighty Scene.

What

What is't the mighty Scene does ſhow?
Th' Eternal Ruler of the Skies,
Now, of a Virgin born, aſſumes our Miſeries,
And in a Manger poorly lies:
A Manger is th' Almighty's Throne below.
No Purple Bands the Royal Infant wears;
No Jewels, only pearly Tears;
But Swathings plain and coarſe are ſeen,
And all Things poor and mean;
Such as the Court appeared, ſo was the Princely Train.

(X)

A Troop of honeſt Shepherds come,
And fill the little Room:
There, the thrice happy Parent view,
Profoundly there their God ador'd,
Profoundly paid a Homage due
To their Redeeming Lord.
Attend, ye mighty Rulers of the Earth;
Behold the Meanneſs of EMANUEL's Birth.
Why will you pride yourſelves in ſhining Pageantry,
And the frail Purple (Pompous Vanity)
And in external Glitter place your chief Magnificence and Worth?

You

(XI)

You, that poſſeſs a mighty Store
Of the fam'd *Indian* Ore,
And o're the Sea, and o're the Land,
Bear an unbounded vaſt Command,
See where your great Exemplar lies
In poor and humble State:
He'll ſhew you where true Merit is,
And who is truly Rich, and who is truly Great.
For were there any real ſubſtantial Good
E'er to be underſtood,
In outward Glare, or any true Nobility in Blood,
'Twould have been ſaid that the *MESSIAH* came,
Born of ſome Princely Dame,
In mighty Glory, mighty Show,
And Pomp Imperial would around him flow.

(XII)

But he, who beſt could know the Worth of Things,
And who were really poor, and who were really Kings,

Came

Came in a lowly State,
To ſhew that He of all Mankind
Is truly Rich, and truly Great,
That to Heroick Virtue is inclin'd,
And largely ſhares the rich Poſſeſſions of the Mind.
And thus we ſometimes ſee,
Bright Strokes of true and ſolid Piety,
And ſomewhat Great, ſomewhat Divine,
In thoſe of mean and low Degree;
For ſpight of all the Dusk, the ſparkling Ray will ſhine.
So in a narrow Cell,
Virtue the moſt ſublime may dwell:
This Truth in Practice our Redeemer ſhow'd,
Who made a Stable entertain the Son of God.

(XIII)

O wondrous Energy of Love Divine!
'Midſt Thouſand Angels, he who erſt did ſhine,
Threw off the awful Enſigns of Immortal State;
Yet might have come, dreadful in Majeſty.

In worldly Pomp and Splendor great;
Choſe rather to be born in Poverty,
To ſhew we ne'er ſhould love what he ſo much did hate.

(XIV)

O happy, happy Day!
Let's ſound the Royal Infant's Praiſe,
In grateful Notes, and in harmonious Lays.
But ſtay, my Soul! ſtay, yet a little ſtay,
For ſee Angellick Forms deſcend.
Th' Immortal People leave their bleſt Abode;
Their glitt'ring Phalanx widely they extend
Through all the vaſt Ætherial Plains;
Like *Sol* in his Meridian Glory ſhine,
And in melodious Strains,
Unanimouſly all combine,
To ſing the Praiſes of the Great Incarnate GOD.

(XV)

Celeſtial Spirits celebrate
Man's happy State;
Divulge the Glories of the new-born King.
Join then, my Soul, thy feeble Lyre,
Almighty Love admire.
Can'ſt thou forbear, when Angels ſing:
With them aloud proclaim,
To all the World thy Saviour's Sacred Name?
And let Heav'n's marbled Vault with loud *Hoſanna's* ring.

(XVI)

And with them cry,
To Mankind Peace,
And laſting Happineſs,
And Glory to th' Eternal GOD on High.
On till the joyful Sounds ev'n downwards go:
Till the glad Tidings reach
Th' Infernal ever-burning Beach,
And the Sulphureous Main and fiery Surge below.

Till ev'ry damn'd Inhabitant of Hell,
Anſwers in diſmal Yell:
Till the dark Cavern'd Priſons ſhake,
And all the wretched gloomy Powers with their Arch-Dæmon quake.

Gloria in Excelſis Deo.